ART EXHIBITION-CATALOGUES REPUBLISHED ON MICROFICHE

Published on microfiche by:

Chadwyck-Healey Ltd
21 Bateman Street
Cambridge CB2 1NB
England

Somerset House
417 Maitland Avenue
Teaneck, NJ 07666
USA

Date of publication and production of master: 1976

Series: The purposes of this series is to make available those catalogues that have lasting interest through their text or their illustrations. Catalogues and cumulations of titles in the series are available from the publishers.

Serial numbers: Each title is identified by a seven-figure serial number placed in the top right hand corner of the microfiche title strip. The first figure indicates the number of the list in which the title first appears. The first three-figure group signifies the gallery or museum; the second three-figure group the accession number for that title.

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Location of original: The National Art Library, Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

Technical data:

Producing laboratory: Micromedia Ltd, Kidlington, Oxford, England.

Note:

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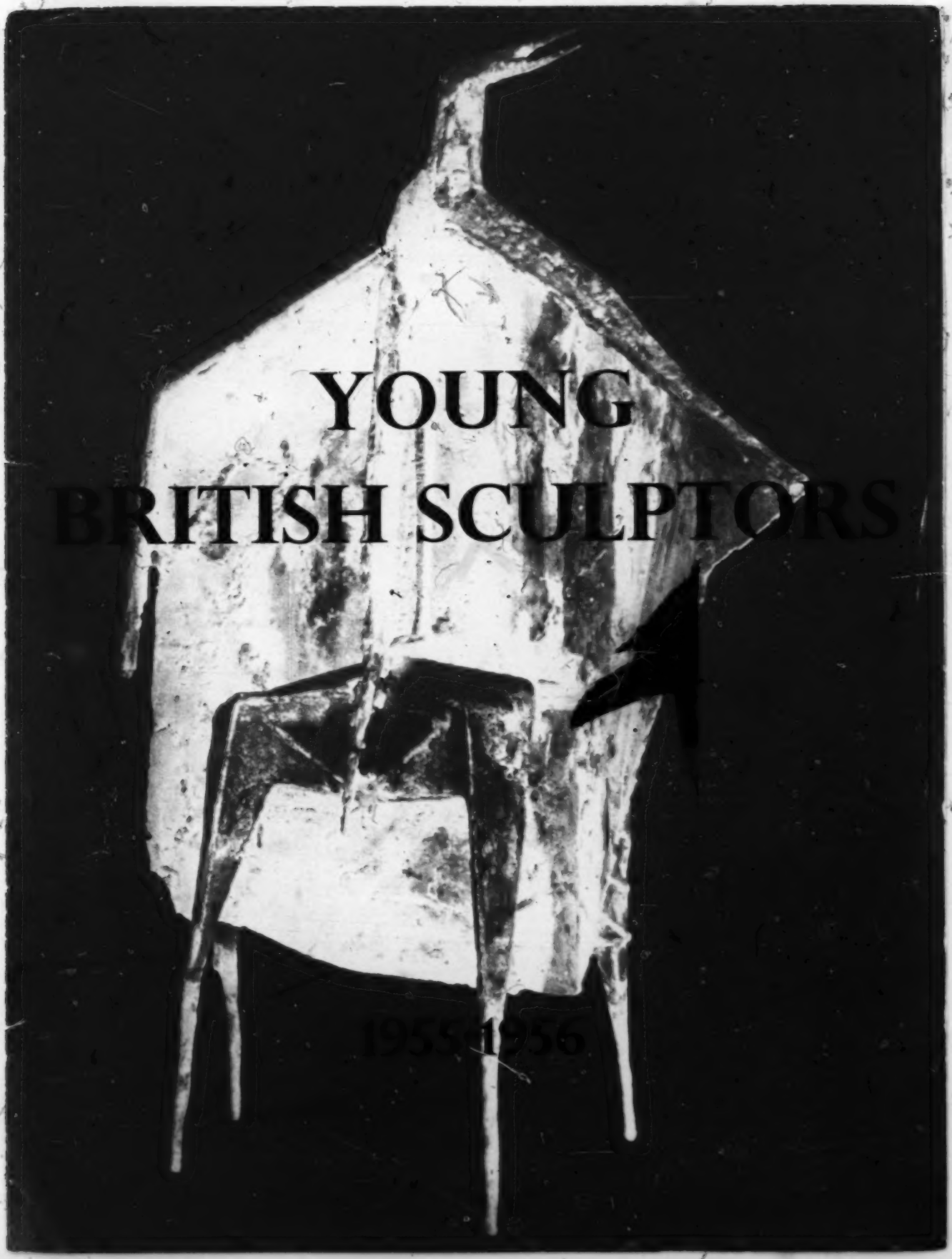
General



YOUNG BRITISH SCULPTORS

1955-1956

AN EXHIBITION OF SCULPTURE AND DRAWINGS BY YOUNG BRITISH SCULPTORS

organised by

THE ARTS CLUB OF CHICAGO

IN COLLABORATION WITH THE BRITISH COUNCIL

Arts Club of Chicago, March 2 to March 29, 1955
Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota, April 15 to May 1955
Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, Ohio, September 15 to October 30, 1955
Albright Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York, November 8 to December 15, 1955
Art Gallery of Toronto, Canada, January 13 to February 13, 1956

NEW ASPECTS OF BRITISH SCULPTURE

THE EIGHT sculptors whose work is shown in this Exhibition are not members of an organized group. They are individuals participating in a general revival of the art of sculpture, and they are related to each other only by some obscure instinct which has touched them all to life. Henry Moore is in some sense no doubt the parent of them all, but the younger sculptors are not imitators of Moore. They have learnt from him, as they have learnt from Picasso, Calder and Giacometti; but only in the sense that these artists of an earlier generation have put at their disposal certain technical inventions which they have proceeded to exploit according to their own temperaments and vision. They have their own inventions—in sculpture there has been nothing like the entomological articulations of Butler's earlier works (though the paintings and drawings of Wilfredo Lam or Masson might be brought into comparison); nothing like Armitage's agonized diaphragms or Paolozzi's conglomerate monoliths. But originality is merely incidental to a collective event such as these young sculptors represent. They are all involved in some wider manifestation of the creative will, some general extension of consciousness.

They are all under fifty, for the most part born during or immediately after the First World War. Two of them were only 16 at the beginning of the Second World War. It would be unreasonable, therefore, to look for the classical images that an earlier generation had seen reflected in the untroubled waters of their childhood. These new images belong to the iconography of despair, or of defiance; and the more innocent the artist, the more effectively he transmits the collective guilt. Here are images of flight, of ragged claws "scuttling across the floors of silent seas", of excoriated flesh, frustrated sex, the geometry of fear. Gone for ever is the serenity, the monumental calm, that a Winckelmann had imposed on the formal imagination of Europe; gone, too, the plastic stress of Rodin. Moore returned to organic prototypes: worked as the elemental forces of wind, fire and water work. The Constructivists turned away from the ruins to create new values, to create the images of a civilization not yet born, perhaps never to be born. These young men are not so ambitious. They express their immediate sensations, sometimes with an almost sophisticated grace (Butler), sometimes with a scorn of bourgeois "finish" (Paolozzi). Their art is close to the nerves, nervous, wiry. Metal, in sheet, strip or wire rather than in mass is their favourite medium. Picasso had anticipated them, as he has anticipated us all, but these British sculptors have given sculpture what it never had before our time—a linear, cursive quality. The consistent avoidance of massiveness, of monumentality, is what distinguishes these epigoni even from their immediate predecessor, Moore. They have seized Eliot's image of the Hollow Men, and given it an isomorphic materiality. They have peopled the Waste Land with their iron waifs.

I am attributing to them a collective unity which they might not acknowledge. Robert Adams, for example, is isolated in his architectonic pursuits: he builds his forms with small but compact masses, generally of wood. At the other extreme Eduardo Paolozzi (Italian by name, but born in Edinburgh)

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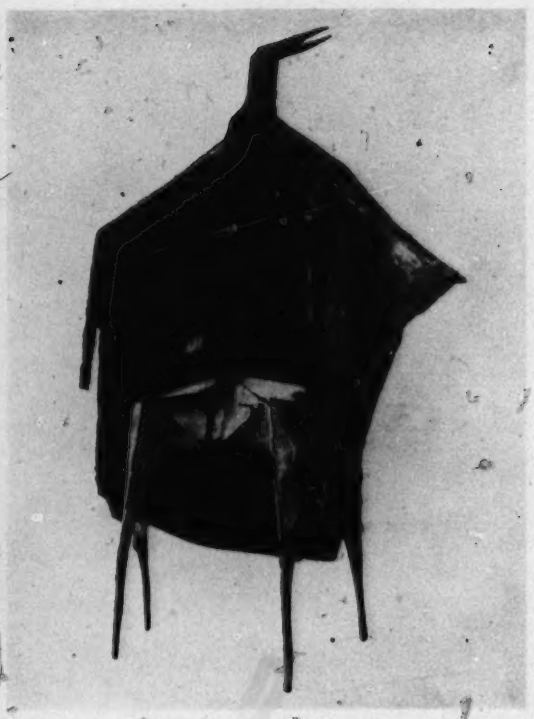

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has moved from skeletal hulks to blind encrusted larvæ, formless in mass, logs that seem to have drifted from the primordial Id. McWilliam is another fantast, but generally confines himself to the human form, creating new forms by the distortion and dissociation of its constituent elements. Meadows has a baroque fantasy; from an animal form, a cock or a crab, he will elaborate a vortex in which the animal's virtue is caught as in a snare. Armitage is an expressionist: a degothicised Barlach, moving in his latest work, towards a sardonic commentary on the stretched agony of human relationships, a master of the superficial intricacies of cast bronze. Chadwick has more playfulness than the others, and is ingenious in his invention of interweaving forms, toys, armed however with vicious teeth and claws. Geoffrey Clarke, with Paolozzi the youngest of the group, forges his iron in strong symmetrical forms, preserving the smelted texture of the metal. Butler stands somewhat apart from the rest, not only because his forged figures are more complex in organization, and more carefully finished in their execution, but also because his work is based on a more precise study of the morphology of nature; also because his imagination is constructive within the logic of natural forms. In this sense he is nearest to Moore, but whereas Moore confines himself to variations within the logic of a single form (the human form for preference), Butler interchanges the idioms of distinct species (man and insect, for example), and creates convincing hybrids, endowed with vitality and grace. But latterly he has been moving towards more humanistic forms, which still retain, however, the nervous energy of his earlier works.

Most of the work exhibited belongs to the last two or three years. Its variety is explained by the intensely creative spirit which animates the group, and which compels them to move quickly from stage to stage in the progressive exploration of new possibilities of plastic expression.

HERBERT READ

ROBERT ADAMS (1917)

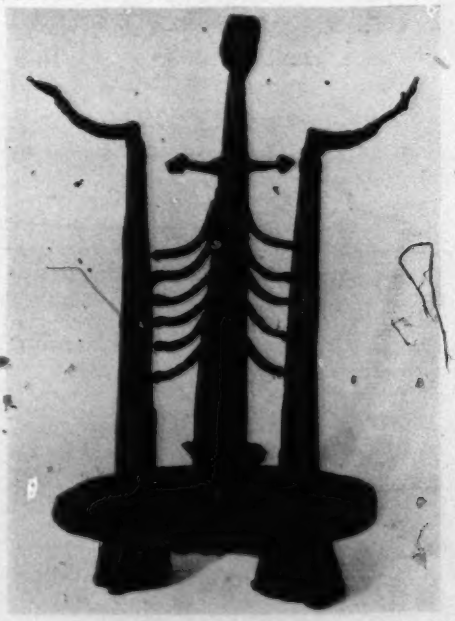
Born in Northampton. Studied in evening classes at the Northampton School of Art. First one-man shows, London 1947, Paris 1949 and New York 1950. Teaches at the Central School of Arts and Crafts, London. Executed a large wooden sculpture commissioned for the 1951 Festival of Britain. Was awarded a prize in the lithograph section of the Sao Paolo Biennial in 1950. Was represented in the exhibition of recent sculpture in the British Pavilion at the Venice Biennale, 1952. Exhibited in the open-air international exhibition of sculpture arranged by the City of Antwerp in 1953, and in the international open-air exhibition of sculpture in Holland Park, London, in 1954.

1. Three forms (1952) *wood* 42½ *ins. high*
2. Divided pillar (1952) *wood* 12¾ *ins. high*
3. Divided column (1952) *wood* 13½ *ins. high*
4. Study for sculpture (1951) *monotype*
5. Black rectangles (1952) *lino print*
6. Black form (1952) *lino print*

KENNETH ARMITAGE (1916)

Born in Leeds. Studied at Leeds College of Art, 1934-37; Slade School of Art, London, 1937-9. Served in the army 1939-46. Has taught at the Bath Academy of Art, Corsham, since 1946. Was represented in the exhibition of recent sculpture in the British Pavilion at the Venice Biennale, 1952. Later that year he held his first one-man show in London. He exhibited in the Salon de Mai, Paris, in 1953; in the open-air international sculpture exhibition arranged by the City of Antwerp in 1953; in the II international sculpture exhibition, Varese, Italy, in 1953, and in the international open-air exhibition of sculpture in Holland Park, London, in 1954. Was awarded the Gregory fellowship in sculpture at Leeds University in 1953. His work is represented in the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and in many other public collections. Examples are included in the Exhibition of "New European Reputations" organised by the Museum of Modern Art, New York in 1955.

7. Children by the sea (1953) *bronze* 17½ *ins. high*
8. People sitting (1952/54) *bronze* 32 *ins. high*
9. Relief—reclining woman (1953/54) *bronze* 21½ x 30 *ins.*
10. Standing figure (1954) *bronze* 32½ *ins. high*
11. Standing group (1954) *black chalk and wash*
12. Seated figure (1954) *black chalk and wash*
13. Seated woman with hands on knees (1954) *black chalk and wash*
14. Standing girl with arms crossed (1954) *black chalk and wash*



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REG BUTLER (1913)

Born Huntingford, Hertfordshire. Trained as an architect and became an Associate of the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1937. Practised as an architect and industrial technologist, 1936-50. Studio Master at the Architectural Association School, 1937-39. Worked as a village blacksmith in Sussex, 1941-45. In 1944 began to work seriously as a sculptor, first in wood and later in lead, bronze and iron. First one-man show, London, 1949. Appointed teacher at the Slade School of Art, London, 1950. Was awarded Gregory Fellowship in sculpture at Leeds University, 1950-53. Executed two large metal sculptures commissioned for the 1951 Festival of Britain. Exhibited in the international sculpture exhibition in Battersea Park, 1951, and his work was included in the exhibition of recent sculpture in the British Pavilion at Venice Biennale in 1952. Grand prize-winner in international sculpture competition "The Unknown Political Prisoner", organised by the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, 1953. His maquette for this competition and related studies were exhibited in the British Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 1954. His work is represented in the Tate Gallery, London, the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and in many other public collections. Examples are included in the Exhibition of "New European Reputations" organised by the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in 1955.

15. Head (1953) *shell bronze* 14½ *ins. high Collection: Mrs L. Somerville*
16. Girl (1953/54) *shell bronze* 69½ *ins. high Collection: British Council*
17. Study for girl (1954) *shell bronze* 19½ *ins. high*
18. Fetish (1954) *shell bronze* 21⅜ *ins. high*
19. Green dancer (1954) *lithograph*
20. Ophelia (1954) *lithograph*
21. Metamorphosis (1954) *lithograph*

LYNN CHADWICK (Born 1914)

Born in London. Trained as an architect. Began experimenting with sculpture after 1945. First one-man exhibition in London in 1950. Was commissioned by the Arts Council to execute a large mobile for the 1951 Festival of Britain. His work was represented in the exhibition of recent sculpture in the British Pavilion at the Venice Biennale, 1952. Exhibited in the Salon de Mai, Paris, 1953; in the open-air international exhibition of sculpture organised by the City of Antwerp, 1953, and in the international open-air exhibition of sculpture in Holland Park, London, 1954. Was one of the chief prize winners in the "Unknown Political Prisoner" international sculpture competition, 1953. His work is represented in the Tate Gallery, London, and in many other public collections. Examples of his work are included in the exhibition "New European Reputations" organised by the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in 1955.

22. The listeners (1952) *iron* 26½ *ins. high*
23. Snapping turtle (1954) *iron and composition* 28 *ins. high*
24. The stranger (1954) *iron and composition* 29 *ins. high*
25. Conjunction-II (1954) *iron and composition* 17½ *ins. high*
26. Three drawings for sculpture: dancing figures (1954) *pen, ink and wash*
27. Two drawings for sculpture: dancing figures (1954) *pen, ink and black chalk*
28. Two drawings for sculpture: cloaked figures (1954) *pen, ink and black chalk*

GEOFFREY CLARKE (Born 1924)

Born at Darley Dale, Derbyshire. He studied at schools of art in Preston, Manchester and Lancaster. Served in the Royal Air Force from 1943 to 1947 and afterwards studied at the Royal College of Art where he won a gold medal for general work and a silver medal for stained glass. In 1951 he was awarded a travelling scholarship to the continent and in the same year he executed a commission in wrought iron and stained glass for the South Bank Exhibition in the Festival of Britain. His first one-man exhibition in London in 1952 contained iron sculpture, stained glass and etchings. Exhibited at the Milan Triennale, 1951. His work was represented in the exhibition of recent sculpture in the British Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 1952. Was commissioned in 1952 to execute a sculpture in wrought-iron for the New

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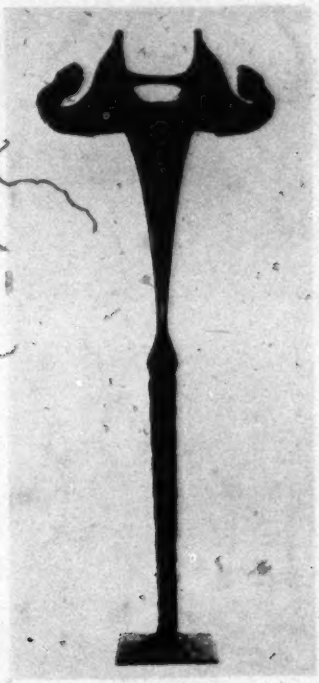
Time/Life Building in Bond Street, London. Is at present engaged on a commission to design and execute 1,500 square feet of stained glass for the new cathedral at Coventry, England.

29. Man (1953) *iron* 17½ *ins. high*
30. Woman (1953) *iron* 15½ *ins. high*
31. Standing figure (1950) *aquatint*
32. Crucifixion (1954) *sugar aquatint*
33. Warrior's head (1954) *sugar aquatint*

F. E. McWILLIAM

Born at Banbridge, Co. Down, Northern Ireland. Studied at the Slade School, London, 1928-31, and in Paris 1931-32. Has taught since 1947 at the Slade School. Held his first one-man exhibition in London in 1939. Exhibited in the international open-air exhibitions of sculpture at Battersea Park, London, 1948 and 1951; the international open-air exhibitions of sculpture in Antwerp in 1953 and at Holland Park, London, in 1954. He was commissioned by the Arts Council to execute a sculpture for the 1951 Festival of Britain. His work is represented in the Tate Gallery and in many other public collections.

34. Study for the Patriarch (1953) *metal* 22½ *ins. high*
35. The pianist (1953) *bronze* 17½ *ins. high*
36. Man erect (1954) *metal* 45½ *ins. high*
37. Parents and children I (1951) *conte crayon*
38. Parents and children II (1951) *conte crayon*
39. Drawing for the Matriarch (1952) *chalk and ink*



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BERNARD MEADOWS (Born 1915)

Born in Norwich. Studied at the Norwich School of Art and the Royal College of Art, London. Served in the R.A.F. 1941-6, and resumed his studies at the Royal College 1948-50. Has from time to time since 1936 worked in Henry Moore's studio. Now teaches drawing and sculpture at the Chelsea School of Art. Was commissioned by the Arts Council to execute a large sculpture in wood for the 1951 Festival of Britain. Exhibited in the international open-air exhibition of sculpture in Battersea Park, London, 1951. His work was included in the exhibition of recent sculpture in the British Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 1952. Exhibited in the open-air international sculpture exhibition arranged by the city of Antwerp, 1953. Was commissioned in 1954 by the Hertfordshire Education Committee to execute a sculpture in bronze for a new school. His work is represented in the Tate Gallery, London, and in many other public collections.

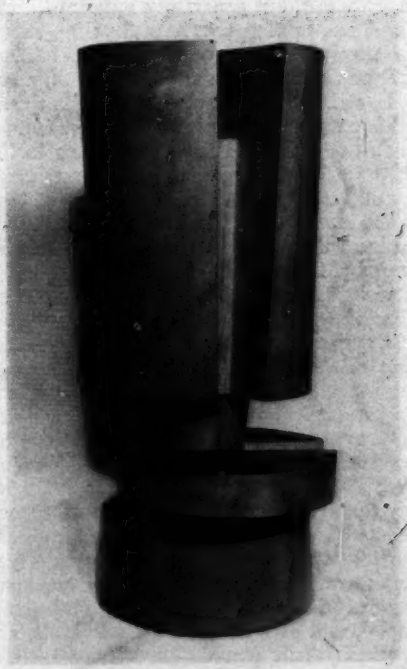
40. Black crab (1951/52) *bronze* 17 *ins. high*
41. Crab (1952) *bronze* 13¼ *ins. high*
42. Four reliefs on the cock theme (1954) *bronze approximately* 4½ x 3½ *ins. each*
43. Three studies for the cock 1951 and three studies for plaster relief (1951) *pencil and water-colour*
    Collection: British Council
44. Six studies for sculpture (1954) *pencil and water-colour*
45. Four studies for sculpture (1954) *pencil and water-colour*

EDUARDO PAOLOZZI (Born 1924)

Born in Edinburgh, he studied at the Slade School, London, 1943-7, and lived in Paris, 1947-9. He held his first one-man exhibition in London in 1947. Since December 1949 he has taught textile design at the Central School of Arts and Crafts, London. He was commissioned to carry out two works, one of them a large fountain, for the Festival of Britain, 1951. His work was included in the collection of recent sculpture exhibited in the British Pâvilion at the Venice Biennale, 1952. He was awarded the British Critics' Prize for 1953. His maquette was one of twelve chosen to represent Great Britain in the finale of the international sculpture competition on the theme of The Unknown Political Prisoner. Was commissioned in 1953 by the Hamburg City Council to design a large fountain for a new park in Hamburg. Has also been commissioned to design murals in collage. His work is represented in the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and in many other public collections.

46. Forms on a bow (1950) *brass* 21⅛ *ins. high*
    Collection: Contemporary Art Society, London
47. Head (1953) *brass* 8⅛ *ins. high*
48. Head and arm (1954) *bronze* 4¾ *ins. high*
49. Head with spectacles (1952) *pen, ink, gouache and watercolour*
50. Man smoking a cigarette (1954) *collage, gouache, pen and ink*
51. Head (1954) *Collage, gouache, pen and ink*

Where no collection is mentioned works are the property of the artist



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Printed in England at The Westminster Press, London, W.9